

Softly within that peaceful resting-place

We lay their wearied limbs, and bid the clay
Press lightly on them till the night be past,
And the far east give note of coming day,

The day of re-appearing! how it speeds!

He who is true and faithful speaks the word,
Then shall we ever be with those we love—
Then shall we be forever with the Lord.

The shout is heard; the archangel's voice goes forth;

The trumpet sounds; the dead awake and sing;
The living put on glory; one glad band,
They hasten up to meet their coming King.

Short death and darkness! Endless life and light!
Short dimming; endless shining in yon sphere,
Where all is incorruptible and pure;—

The joy without the pain, the smile without the tear.

GROWING IN GRACE

2 Pet. 3: 17, 18; 1 Pet. 2: 1, 2; Eph. 4: 12-15.

Topic for Sunday, April 6.

HOME READINGS

Mon., Mar. 31, Grace in trial, 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.

Tues., April 1, Grace from Christ, John 1: 10-17.

Wed., " 2, Growth in Christ, John 15: 1-8.

Thur., " 3, Grace abounding, 2 Cor. 9: 8-14.

Fri., " 4, From strength to strength, Ps. 84: 5-12.

Sat., April 5, Follow on, Hos. 6: 1-3.

Spring time brings to our view the signs of growth on every side. Bursting buds and opening flowers and springing grass show forth the growing power of life. All nature teaches us that growth or decay must be in progress. There is no permanent stopping place.

The spiritual life is also a matter of growth. Let not any of our young people hold to the antiquated idea that one needs only to be baptized and a member of the church in order to have a clear title to the fullest joys and privileges of heaven.

Heaven would be nothing to one unable to appreciate its joys. But the ability to appreciate spiritual joys is a matter of growth.

We are all so familiar with the laws of growth that it surely will be easy to understand the conditions of spiritual growth.

SCRIPTURE HELP

1. The first essential—life. John 3: 36.

Dead things do not grow. We can work out our own salvation only after God first gives it to us.

A merely moral man trying to be "as good as Christians" away from Christ and the church is like a man trying to make a dead vine like a fruitful vine by tying clusters of fruit upon it. Life can only come from life. And the Christ-type of life can only come from Christ. Accept him and growth in Christian virtue will naturally follow.

Is there no way of gaining the Christ-type of life merely by our own efforts? Why not?

2. Put away the hindrances. The stones and thorns choke the seed. Many things also hinder spiritual growth. Show how the things mentioned in the following references hinder growth.

1 Pet. 2: 1; Col. 3: 5-9; Mk. 4: 18, 19; Heb. 12: 1. Name other hindrances.

How about dancing, card playing, theatre going, novel-reading, tobacco-using, fashion-seeking, slang, idleness, and such like?

How does self-righteousness prevent growth?

How does formality prevent growth?

How does discouragement prevent growth?

How does carelessness prevent growth?

3. Growth requires food. What is our spiritual food? (1. The Word. 1 Pet. 2: 2. How does the Word help us? 2 Tim. 3: 16. 2. Christ

1 Pet. 2: 3, 4. Why must we keep coming to Christ as a means of growth?)

4. Growth requires exercise. How can we exercise spiritually? Acts 24: 16; 1 Tim. 4: 7.

Will we ever grow stronger if we do not use the strength we have?

If members are too timid to take part in meeting how can they grow more brave?

If Christians harbor jealousy or hatred toward any one can they grow?

5. Indications of growth.

a. More grace. 2 Pet. 3: 18.

b. More faith. 2 Thes. 1: 3.

c. More love. 1 Thes. 3: 11, 12.

d. More holiness. 2 Cor. 7: 1.

Name other indications of growth.

6. The end of growth—Christ-likeness. Eph. 4: 14-16; 4: 9, 10; Matt. 5: 48.

7. God's part in growth. Phil. 2: 12, 13.

POINTS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How is the church an aid to growth in grace?

2. What help to growth is there in the communion service?

3. Will life be happier as we grow in grace?

4. May all grow?

5. If we are not growing whose fault is it?

6. What can we do to help those who are starving to death spiritually because careless of the means of grace?

7. Would we grow in grace more if we supported our church enterprises better?

8. What are the rewards of growth in grace?

9. As we grow will we have new doubts and difficulties to overcome?

10. How may we help one another to grow in grace?

C. F. YODER.

Christ the Way to Immortality

N. D. HILLIS

For all men Christ is the way to an immortal hope. Before Christ lived and died the Tuscans made each tomb face the west, for the soul's sun had set never to rise. After Christ tombs faced the east, for the sun had disappeared to stand again upon the horizon clothed with the untroubled splendor. There is a chamber in the catacombs used about the time of Julius Caesar, and every tomb has emblems of the skull and crossbones. Hard by is another chamber of a later generation, and lo! Christ's teachings have carved upon each stone a lily, eloquent of immortal hope. In his "Disputations" Cicero said the endowments of the soul seem to imply another life. The unthinking oak lives many centuries. Even such a brute as the elephant had a career that touched the confines of two centuries. But if man entered the scene clothed with the attributes of God, he had years less than the beast and the arena of an insect. What a creator was man! He entered the desert, and it became a garden; he turned wild rice into yellow harvests, forked sticks into great plows, papyrus leaves into books, huge stones into temples, and cathedrals, made the desert a garden and the wilderness a city. Yet beneath the oak living for centuries sleeps Cicero and some twenty generations of his descendants, so ephemeral is man's career. Not until fifteen does the youth awake to the thought "I live!" A few days later he finds a grave dugged in the wavering

grass, and man exclaims, "I shall die." Then comes life's greatest thought, "Dying, I shall live again."

The Roman orators exclaimed, "If there be a meeting place of the dead!" Then Christ entered the scene, whispering that God was fully equal to the emergency named "death." Unto God all live. Passing thru the grave He exclaimed, "Because I live ye shall live also!" And from that hour death was clothed in sweet allurements. The falling statesman, the dying martyr and mother welcome the signs of death as signals hanged from the heavenly battlements. The iron mask of death fell off, and death stood forth the shining angel of God coming for welcome and convoy. The dark river narrowed as a tiny ribbon. It seemed but a step to the immortal shore. The path of death became a path of living light. Striking hands with Jesus Christ, the little child, the sage, the statesman, and the seer alike, went joyously toward death, and disappearing passed on into an immortal summer.

Christian Life

An Easter Prayer

REV. GEORGE H. WALLACE

Come, angel of the Easter morn,
Down from thy home of light;
Disperse the gloom of every heart,
Bid every soul be bright.
Let nightly flower no more for us
Bloom sorrow or regret,
But lilies white with fragrance sweet,
On every side be met.

Let sunshine kiss the waiting earth—
Call forth the flowers rare;
Invite the song birds' sweetest trill
To fill the pulsing air.

Bowed down are we with doubts and fears—
Care's heavy burden lies
On spirits faint from useless toils—
Our heart, o'erweighed, cries.
Relief comes not, we pray in vain,
All efforts fail to bring
Sweet peace the promise of His word—
Earth's joys we cannot sing.

Come, angel, with new life and hope,
'Tis Resurrection morn;
Bring earth's rewards to faithful souls—
New loyalty be born.
We've longed and labored for the time—
Now satisfy the soul;
New life, new joys, new hopes, new gifts,
With Heaven the final goal.

—New York Observer.

Easter Hope and Duty

On the first Easter morning, when our Lord rose from the grave, hope was born into the world. Looking into the empty sepulchre the disciples thought they had lost not only the earthly companionship, but even the sacred body of their beloved Master. They were in utter despair. But the facts were far otherwise than they thought. Christ was not dead, nor was his body stolen. He had risen from the grave, the first fruits of them that slept, henceforth giving his followers, all of them and thru all